

EGN

Erie Gay News



2020 Health Needs Assessment Zoom presentations on Feb 25

The Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center will present an overview of the 2020 Pennsylvania LGBTQ Health Needs Assessment focused on Erie. There will be two sessions, both on Thursday, February 25. The first session will be at 1 PM and primarily targets health and human services professionals, and the other session will be at 7 PM, which will mainly target community members. However, anyone is welcome to go to either or both sessions. They are both expected to last about 45 minutes. The link to register for the 1 PM session is https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EUrrIWS-RfKk6a8Fg-knQg, and the link for the 7 PM session is https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_m-xh9CQqQQW42wP7Ckgm-g.

This project was funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.
Co-sponsors are

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NW PA Tobacco Control
Pennsylvania Equality Project
Rebecca Mae's Drag Brunch



Elaine Reed, Leah Manino, and Alex Sphon at Gem City Dinor on December 21 for Warm Coats and Boots Drive.

Safe Harbor
Safe Journey
SafeNet
Thrive Therapy Space
TransFamily of NW PA
UPMC Hamot
Zone Dance Club

Coat and Boot Drive on Dec 21

from Greater Erie Alliance for Equality

On Monday, December 21, 2020, The Greater Erie Alliance, NW PA Pride, and NW Rural AIDS Alliance joined forces to hold a warm coat and boot drive to benefit individuals served by the Ryan White Program. The drop off site was hosted by the Gem City Dinor, 3545 West 12th Street in Erie. Owners Elaine Reed and Rich Hodges were happy to open their doors to host the coat/boot drive.

The Gem City Dinor graciously gave back to

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If you are restarting events or are moving to hosting events/meetings virtually, or want to change your copies received for distribution, please email info@eriegaynews.com

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The *Erie Gay News* is published monthly as a source of news, events, information, and support for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people (GLBTs), their families, friends, and supporters in the Erie PA area.

We welcome and encourage all readers to submit timely news, comments, and opinions of interest to local GLBTs for publication in these pages. Please include your contact information with any piece you submit.

Erie Gay News is now included in
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THANKS
 From Your Friends at Erie Gay News

To Lake Erie Counseling Associates for hosting! Andrea Shaffer, Audrey, Johauna, Kim Conti, and Rex Apps for folding; Audrey, Johauna, Kim Conti, and Rex Apps for distribution; Mike Lipiec for ad layout & etc. If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com.

Community News

donors with vouchers for a free bowl of soup at their next visit.

The drive was successful due to the exceptional generosity of our community. Together, donors brought in about two hundred coats and dozens of boots. Other donations included warm hats/gloves and face masks.

These donations are distributed by the staff of NW PA Rural AIDS Alliance and significantly impact the recipients.



Items collected on December 21 for Warm Coats and Boots Drive.

Zone Is Temporarily Closed

The Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie PA, unexpectedly closed on January 23 because one of the employees tested positive for COVID-19. The employee had minimal contact with the rest of the staff and no contact with customers.

The Zone is currently following the Erie County Dept of Health, PA Dept of Health, and CDC guidelines.

As a precaution, all staff is being tested. The Zone will reopen once their space has been thoroughly cleaned and the staff all tests negative.

They are committed to protecting both our employees and customers. We will continue to do our best to ensure protective measures stay in place. We appreciate the tremendous support that our community has given us in this challenging time.

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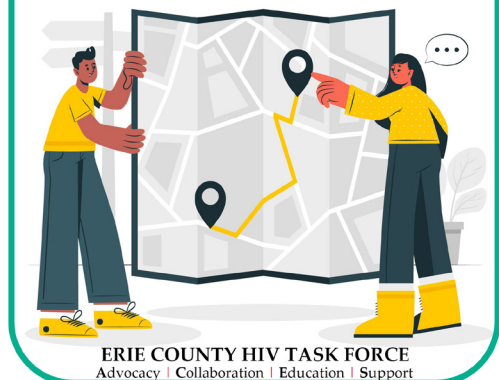
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Mayor's LGBTQIA+ Advisory Council meeting Jan 13

The Mayor's LGBTQIA+ Advisory Council met on January 13. Erie's Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Municipal Equality Index is now at 80. We will explore having County Council pass a conversion therapy ban, similar to what the City of Erie passed in June 2019. We are still working with the Chief of Police on gathering hate crime info. We will also send letters to state legislators advocating for a statewide conversion therapy ban and non-discrimination. Pennsylvania also lacks explicit protections for sexual orientation and gender identity in hate crimes legislation at the state level.

The City of Erie is looking to having language into agreements with youth program contractors, including gender expression and sexual orientation in anti-bullying policies.

The Mayor's Council will be supporting the Zoom presentations on February 25 by the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center on the overview of the 2020 Pennsylvania LGBTQ Health Needs Assessment. A flyer graphic has already been sent to all co-sponsoring organizations for sharing on social media. The council also made recommendations for topics to be included.

The Second Harvest Food Bank of NW PA has also been in contact with some council members about ways to ensure that community members can easily access food pantries that are LGBTQIA+ friendly. Member organizations are also working on setting up a good drive for late February/ early March.

The Mayor's Council next meets March 4.

Erie Sisters update

We are looking forward to an exciting 2021 year!

Erie Sisters Transgender Support Group is proceeding with its Lake Erie Gala event scheduled for November 17 thru the 21st.

We plan to hold the Gala at the Clarion Hotel in Erie. You can go to www.lakeeriegala.com for updates and registration. Please note this is NOT the eriesisters.ning.com web site. All scheduling and payments for the Gala will be handled at www.lakeeriegala.com. As long as the world gets back to normality, we are moving forward with our planning of all the events. The planning committee is currently discussing events, gala theme, makeovers, and vendors. We want to put this out there to give us some hope for something exciting to look forward to this year!

If you haven't attended one of our monthly virtual Zoom parties, you have missed out on a fabulous time! Erie Sister is planning a Virtual Valentine's Day Party on February 12 from 7 PM to 10 PM and

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also an Erie Sisters Virtual Cabin Fever Happy Hour on February 27 from 7 PM till 10 PM. Please check eriesisters.ning.com for the Zoom details.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the February 2021 Cabin Fever event is canceled. The hotel bar and pool/hot tub are still closed until further notice. We are fully anticipating that everything will be fully opened once more vaccinations are doled out.

There will be an Erie Sisters Virtual Cabin Fever Happy Hour on February 27 from 7 PM till 10 PM.

Erie Sisters membership dues are now due. We know many have just paid during the Gala week, but due to circumstances beyond our control, that was not possible. There are options available for remittance. You can now pay them directly through eriesisters.ning.com, or by snail mail to the PO Box. The address can be found on the [eriesisters.ning](https://eriesisters.ning.com) website.

Please stay safe, and we hope to see you soon!

Let's Talk About Money

from SafeNet

What form of abuse do ninety-nine percent of partner violence victims have in common? Here are some hints: it doesn't leave bruises, it loves creating dependency, and it leaves its victims broke and broken.

Financial abuse happens when one partner demands control of all the couple's money and financial decisions. Not only is the other partner kept financially dependent, even if they bring in a good income, but their long-term credit can be ruined and their bank accounts drained.

In order to keep their partners financially dependent, abusive partners can harass them at work, make them call off, or in other ways deliberately jeopardize their employment. They may hide or lie about their own income or debts.

The effects of financial abuse can be devastating, both emotionally and economically. Victims can feel overwhelmed, inadequate, and depressed due

What form of abuse do 99% of partner violence victims have in common? *You might be surprised.*

Does your partner:

- Control your money, credit cards, or bank account?
- Ruin your credit because of credit cards or financial contracts put in your name?
- Harass you at work or control when, where, if you work?
- Hide or lie about their own income or debt?
- Make all financial decisions?
- Make you ask for money or give you an allowance?

**It's called financial abuse, and
it can leave you broke and broken.**



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to the emotional stress that accompanies financial abuse. They may be unable to purchase food, clothing, and other necessities. They can't participate in activities they enjoy or socialize with friends because they have no money or must account for every penny they spend.

If you are experiencing financial pressures caused by a controlling partner, don't be afraid to reach out for help because "it's only money." Financial abuse is unlikely to get better over time. In fact, it often leads to additional forms of intimate partner violence.

Local Legislators Behaving Badly

by Pamela Nolan

Republican state Senators Dan Laughlin and Michele Brooks recently refused to seat their state Senate colleague.

Senator Jim Brewster (D-McKeesport), won re-election in November. The results were certified, and his opponent's suit challenging the count was dismissed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

His opponent subsequently brought suit in federal court. When it came time to swear in new legislators, Republicans refused to allow Lt. Governor Fetterman to administer the oath of office to Brewster. When Fetterman insisted on swearing him in, Laughlin and Brooks voted to have Fetterman removed from the Senate chambers.

The federal court dismissed Brewster's opponent's suit, and Senator Brewster has since been seated.

Notably, Laughlin and Brooks also signed onto the Texas Attorney General's suit against Pennsylvania via an amicus brief.

So Republicans Laughlin and Brooks voted to unseat their legitimately-elected colleague, voted to throw the lieutenant governor out of Senate chambers, and wanted to have your votes thrown out via a Texas lawsuit.

In addition, our Congressional Representative Mike Kelly (R-PA District 16) filed two suits of his own, one at the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and one



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at the United States Supreme Court, to have Pennsylvania's mail-in ballots discarded. The bill allowing no-excuse mail-in ballots was passed in 2019 by the Pennsylvania legislature, but Kelly claimed it was unconstitutional. Both suits were dismissed.

Then on January 6, AFTER the Capitol was overrun by an angry mob, Kelly objected to the counting of Pennsylvania's electoral votes. His objection did not succeed.

So Republican Mike Kelly wanted to have your votes thrown out.

Draw your own conclusions about our Republican legislators.

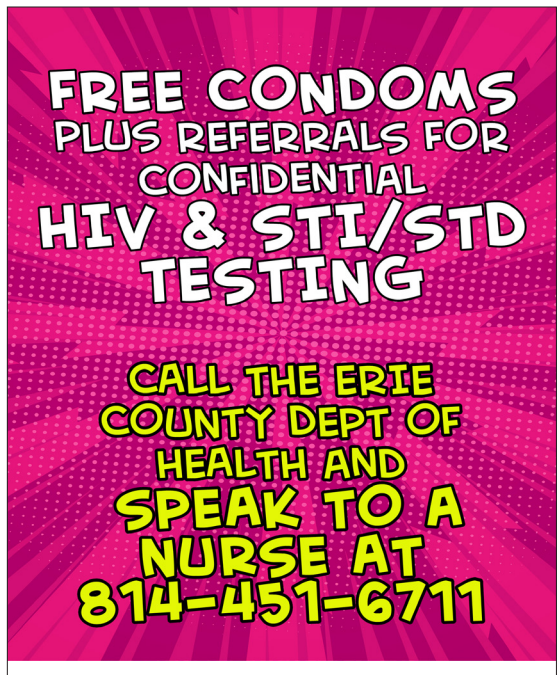
PYC Statement on Historic Nomination of Dr. Rachel Levine for Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services

President-Elect Joe Biden Nominates High-Level Out Transgender Public Official for Federal Post

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The Pennsylvania Youth Congress congratulates Pennsylvania Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine on her historic nomination to become Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services in the Biden Administration. If confirmed by the Senate, she would be the highest-ranking out transgender official in the United States government. Dr. Levine was first the Physician General of Pennsylvania when Governor Tom Wolf took office in 2015, and became Secretary of Health in 2018. She was unanimously confirmed by the Pennsylvania State Senate for both posts.

Dr. Levine has been a longtime champion of LGBTQ inclusion and equity. She was active in several LGBTQ organizations before joining the Wolf Administration, in addition to her inclusive healthcare practice and teaching at Penn State – Hershey Medical Center.

Dr. Levine and her team have worked closely with the Pennsylvania Youth Congress on numerous issues for the past six years. She was the first chair of the Governor's LGBTQ Workgroup, of which the Pennsylvania Youth Congress is an original member. She also helped direct the Workgroup's subcommittee on transgender healthcare, which often



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included meetings in her personal office. In 2018, the Pennsylvania Youth Congress honored her with their Keystone Award, which recognizes LGBTQ trailblazers who are elected or appointed officials across the commonwealth. She has spoken at Pennsylvania Youth Congress events, including directly with trans youth throughout PA at a PYC-organized emergency roundtable when the Trump Administration rescinded civil rights protections for trans youth in 2017.

“Dr. Levine is a Pennsylvania treasure and now the nation will benefit from her expertise. As she has in Pennsylvania, she will remain laser-focused on the mission to safeguard the health and wellbeing of all people. She will continue to provide specific attention to the health of vulnerable communities, including LGBTQ people. I’ve known Dr. Levine for over a decade and have always been inspired by her leadership, authenticity, and wisdom,” said Jason Landau Goodman, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Youth Congress.

Pennsylvania Youth Congress’s State Policy Associate Preston Heldibridle said, “The first time I ever became involved with advocacy was when I met Dr. Levine. As a high school student I was able to meet with her in the wake of the federal government’s horrible attack on trans youth. She was there for us in our time of need, and I will never forget that. I knew then I had to get involved. Having a highly competent public official with decades of experience and knowledge in healthcare will let us get right into the work of protecting the very lives of all Americans, and especially vulnerable transgender and queer youth. She has served as a beacon of hope and inspiration for me and many other young trans Pennsylvanians.

Dr. Levine has done a stellar job serving not only the trans community, but all Pennsylvanians throughout her time in state leadership, even in the midst of the worst public health crisis of our lifetimes. I have full faith she will continue to lead with strength and grace at the federal level as well.”

As Secretary of Health for Pennsylvania, Dr. Levine has experienced vicious and vile anti-transgender attacks during the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been many instances of business owners and private citizens lashing out against her actions to save lives of Pennsylvanians with cruel messages on large signs on the street, restaurant menus, or even a dunk booth at the Bloomsburg Fair. In response to the outrageous actions of the Bloomsburg Fair, the Pennsylvania Youth Congress coordinated a demand letter to the fair’s leadership signed by over 50 LGBTQ community organizations throughout the commonwealth. As a testament to her high regard by trans and queer leaders in Pennsylvania, those 50+ organizations signed on within less than 24 hours.

In response to those attacks, she issued a strong response. “Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate and hate leads to suffering. People fear what they don’t understand, and obviously they have a heightened sense of fear and anxiety given the uncertainties of our times. I hope that by being a public figure and being secretary of health during this public health crisis, that that educates people about LGBTQ individuals and transgender individuals — and if they are educated, then they fear less. Thus, they get less angry, and thus, they hate less.”

The Pennsylvania Youth Congress joins with dozens of LGBTQ organizations throughout the nation in urging the Senate to swiftly confirm her appointment so she can get right to work. As Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, she would help manage numerous key health offices and programs throughout the agency, including 10 regional health offices across America, the Office of the Surgeon General, and the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.

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PENNSYLVANIA LGBTQ HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

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OR

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Christina Graham Brasavage | Data & Evaluation Manager
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center
christina@bradburysullivancenter.org

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center provides arts, health, youth, and pride programs to
strengthen and support the LGBT community across the Greater Lehigh Valley.

This project was funded through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Health.



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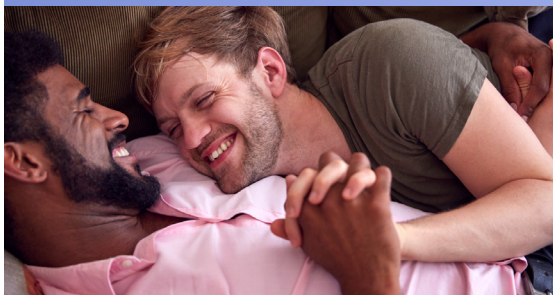


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Calendar

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Jan 25 - Jun 30 (Mon - Wed) - F*CK7THGRADE (Online, Pittsburgh, PA 15203) In this world premiere concert film, award-winning singer-songwriter Jill Sobule – whose 1990's hits include “Supermodel” and the original “I Kissed a Girl” – takes audiences through a Rock’n’Roll celebration of coming of age and coming out. Phone: (412) 413-2480. Browse to <https://citytheatre.culturaldistrict.org/>. RSVP/Register/Tickets at <https://citytheatrecompany.org/play/fck7thgrade/>.

Jan 27 (Wed) - Holocaust Remembrance Day Day to remember all of the victims of the Nazi era. Browse to <https://www.yadvashem.org/27th/index.asp>.

Jan 28 - 31 (Thu - Sun) - Creating Change Virtual Conference The four-day long event, run by the National LGBTQ Task Force, is a space for learning, connecting, and growing as LGBTQ activists, leaders, allies, and changemakers from across the nation join together. For the first time in its 33 year history, The Creating Change Conference will hold all day long institutes, workshops, keynotes, and caucus sessions online. Phone: (202) 393-5177. Browse to <https://www.thetaskforce.org/creatingchange.html>.

Feb 7 (Sun) - National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day February 7 is National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD), a national HIV testing and treatment community mobilization initiative targeted at Blacks in the United States and the Diaspora. NBHAAD was founded in 1999 as a national response to the growing HIV and AIDS epidemic in African American communities. #NBHAAD Browse to <https://nationalblackaidsday.org/>.

Feb 8 (Mon) - Erie County Democratic Party LGBTQIA+ Caucus meets (Zoom) 7 PM. General meeting on Zoom. Contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or mmahler@eriedems.com.

Feb 9 (Tue) - Youngstown PFLAG meets virtually (Zoom) 7 PM - 8:30 PM. Youngstown Area PFLAG's support group meeting will gather virtually. Any person who would like to join us can request the zoom link from youngstownareapflag.org Contact: Toni Schilderout. Email: youngstownareapflag@gmail.com. Browse to <http://www.youngstownpflag.org/>.

Feb 16 (Tue) - Erie County HIV Task Force meets via Zoom 1 PM - 2:30 PM. Zoom Meeting ID: 927 9128 9996. Passcode: 940728

Feb 20 (Sat) - “Power, Love & Presence: The Joys

of Getting Older” Workshop (Zoom) 4 PM - 6 PM. Workshop will be based on upcoming book: “The Gay Man’s Guide to Aging Well”. Each workshop in the series will have unique content. You can attend all three workshops or any combination of the three. Although the workshops will be on ZOOM, they will be interactive experiences: you’ll be talking with different men individually (through the use of breakout rooms) as well as discussing topics with the entire group of men. To keep it easy and fun to participate, each workshop is limited to a maximum of 20 men. Each workshop will run for 2 hours with a short break midway. Contact: Michael Dale Kimmel. Browse to <https://www.lifebeyonddtherapy.com/>. RSVP/Register/Tickets at <https://lifebeyonddtherapy.net/workshops/>.

Feb 21 - 27 (Sun - Sat) - Aromantic Spectrum Awareness Week An aromantic is someone who doesn’t experience romantic attraction. Arospec is the shorthand name for people who identify anywhere on the aromantic spectrum, including aromantics. Aro Awareness Week is for anyone on the aromantic spectrum, regardless of where they lie there or sexual orientation. Browse to <http://www.arospecweek.org/>.

Feb 23 (Tue) - Queer Youth: Allies in Motion (Virtual) 6 PM - 7:30 PM. GeeXella is a singer, rapper, DJ, and community organizer who gets inspires us through their music, lyrics, and message. They are leading a workshop on becoming a stronger ally for BIPOC queer youth. They are an inspiration and true agent of change. You won’t want to miss out on this opportunity! Register at <https://linktr.ee/comptonstable> Events are free for all youth between the ages of 12 - 20 years. Browse to <https://comptonstable.org/>. RSVP/Register/Tickets at <https://linktr.ee/comptonstable>.

Feb 23 (Tue) - Erie Gay News folding/distribution work party (Lake Erie Counseling Associates, 301 W 10th St, Erie, PA 16502) 7 PM. Limited number of volunteers welcome. You must wear a mask and practice social distancing.

Feb 26 (Fri) - International STAND UP to Bullying Day International STAND UP to Bullying Day is a special event in which participants sign and wear a pink “pledge shirt” to take a visible, public stance against bullying. Browse to <https://www.facebook.com/pg/standupday/>.

Feb 27 (Sat) - TransFamily of NWPA (Erie) Transgender Support Group meets (Zoom) 2 PM. Currently meeting via Zoom. Please message via Facebook page for meeting info.

**A HEALTHY HEART,
IS A HAPPY HEART.**



This project was funded through a grant from the
Pa. Department of Health